

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Kingman Field Office**

**Bagdad Stockpile Extension Project
Environmental Assessment**

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0014-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0014-EA, dated August 2016. I have determined that the Proposed Actions, including the applicant-committed environmental protection measures, along with implementation of any mitigation measures agreed to by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the proponents, will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as described in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.27. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Context

The project area is located in west-central Yavapai County, immediately west of the unincorporated community of Bagdad, Arizona.

The EA analyzes the Freeport-McMoRan Bagdad Inc. (FMBI) request to authorize extension of the existing waste rock stockpile located south of the open pit at the Bagdad Mine, as well as authorization for installation of two groundwater monitoring wells and development of associated access roads south of the proposed stockpile extension. FMBI requests to extend the existing Bagdad stockpile facility onto 441 acres of BLM-managed land and 79 acres of FMBI-owned land in Sections 16 and 17, Township 14 North, Range 9 West, Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian. Leaching would occur on the Plan IX Leach (western) portion of the proposed stockpile, with overburden and other waste rock stored on the South Waste Rock (eastern) portion of the stockpile.

The EA also analyzes the Arizona Public Service (APS) request for an amendment to their existing right-of-way (ROW) for power line maintenance access roads. The APS proposal would amend the existing ROW to allow construction of new and improvement of existing access roads (0.6 mile) necessary for future maintenance of the 115-kilovolt (kV) power line.

For a complete description of the proposed project, please refer to the EA, Chapter 2, Section 2.2, Proposed Actions.

The short- and long-term impacts from implementation of the Proposed Actions are local; they are not regional or national in nature.

Intensity

The EA analyzed both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed project for various resources, including Air Resources, Water Resources, Geology and Soil Resources, Vegetation Resources, Wildlife Resources, Cultural Resources, Recreation Resources/Public Access, Wilderness Resources, Visual Resources, Noise, and Land Use/Grazing. Applicant-committed environmental protection measures are incorporated into the Proposed Actions to avoid or reduce adverse impacts to these resources. The BLM also recommended additional mitigation measures to reduce impacts.

None of the environmental impacts discussed in detail in the Environmental Consequences section of the EA are considered significant.

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse

Development of the proposed stockpile extension will, at full buildout, permanently cover approximately 520 acres (441 acres BLM-managed land and 79 acres FMBI-owned land) to a maximum height of approximately 1,200 feet above the present ground surface (approximately 4,850 feet above mean sea level). Thus, approximately 520 acres of existing chaparral and disclimax grassland vegetation communities and wildlife habitat within the proposed stockpile extension footprint would be permanently and irretrievably lost, as would any potential for recreational use of these lands (such as off-highway vehicle [OHV] use, hunting, hiking, wildlife viewing, etc.). Three known seeps and springs within the project footprint would be permanently buried beneath the stockpile. One cultural site that has been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) would similarly be covered. Construction of the stockpile extension, if approved, is anticipated to occur over a period of approximately 40 years, and would result in a modest increase during that time frame in generation of fugitive dust (particulates) and ambient noise, particularly for residents of Kellis Ranch and other receptors nearer the project area boundaries. At full buildout, the stockpile extension would extend above the existing landforms and dominate the view from a number of observation points in the vicinity of the mine. Because FMBI has stated there will be no increase in overall mining production or change in staffing levels at the Bagdad Mine as a result of the stockpile extension, no significant social or economic effects, either beneficial or adverse, are anticipated.

Development of the proposed APS power line access roads would be limited to less than 2 acres of BLM-managed lands. Environmental impact from construction and use these access roads is anticipated to be negligible, with the exception of one cultural site that has been determined to be eligible for the NRHP that would be adversely impacted.

2. Degree of effect on public health and safety

The decision to authorize the stockpile extension would not have significant adverse impacts to public health because FMBI would be required to follow all Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) regulations. In addition, FMBI has implemented supplementary safety programs to reflect corporate policies and site-specific considerations. Through MSHA training, all employees are trained to observe and report suspicious or unusual activity that threatens safety or security. Gates are located on all access roads to the mine and are maintained, closed, and locked, with access available only to mine personnel. Perimeter gates found damaged are immediately repaired.

Air quality (fugitive dust) impacts would occur at the Kellis Ranch property, which is approximately 0.6 mile from the stockpile extension area, as the stockpile moves closer to this residence. However, this impact is not significant.

The decision to issue an amended ROW grant to APS for the power line access roads would have no impact on public health and safety.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, cultural resources were identified and evaluated in the vicinity of the Proposed Actions. The proposed stockpile extension would directly and adversely impact one NRHP-eligible site. As planned, the stockpile would completely cover the area where the site is located, meaning it would permanently disturb and/or prevent access to the site. Impacts to the site would be major and long term. The proposed APS ROW amendment involving new construction of one road segment and improvement of another road segment, totaling 0.6 mile in length and approximately 1.4 acres in area, would directly and adversely impact an additional NRHP-eligible site. Mitigation for adverse impacts to cultural resources will be detailed in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and Historic Properties Treatment Plan (HPTP) for the FMBI proposal and a separate MOA and HPTP for the APS proposal; these documents are currently being developed.

There are no park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, or ecologically critical areas impacted by the Proposed Actions.

4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial

The Proposed Actions are not expected to have effects on the quality of the human environment that are highly controversial. During scoping, the public asked that the EA include study of the impacts of ongoing water use at the Bagdad Mine on regional groundwater sources. However, it was determined that water usage was outside the scope of the EA analysis (see the EA, Chapter 1, Section 1.7.2, Issues Eliminated from Detailed Analysis, for more information).

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk

There are no known effects of the Proposed Actions identified in the EA that are considered highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. Project activities similar to what is included in the Proposed Actions have been conducted numerous times over many years on BLM-managed lands, and the effects are well understood. This is documented in the effects analysis in Chapter 3 of the EA.

6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration

The Proposed Actions will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision about a future consideration. The Proposed Actions are within the scope of the

Kingman Field Office Resource Management Plan. Any future proposed project in the vicinity of the Proposed Actions will be analyzed under applicable regulations independent of the Proposed Actions analyzed in this EA.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts

Direct and indirect impacts of the Proposed Actions were analyzed in Chapter 3 of the EA. None of the environmental impacts described in detail in Chapter 3 are considered significant. Each resource analysis includes a cumulative impact analysis that considered past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions using resource-specific cumulative effects analysis areas. The cumulative impacts analyses determined that the Proposed Actions would not incrementally contribute to any significant impacts.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources

A Class III pedestrian survey was conducted of the Proposed Actions project area. Two sites were determined eligible for the NRHP.

One of the NRHP-eligible sites would be directly and adversely impacted by the two proposed APS access roads.

All agreed-upon mitigation will be outlined in an MOA and HPTP detailing proponent responsibilities for implementing mitigation to site impacts. Any road construction or improvements involving ground disturbance will be monitored by a cultural resources specialist to ensure that site impacts are minimized.

The other NRHP-eligible site will be directly and adversely impacted by the stockpile extension. The stockpile will completely cover the area where the site is located, meaning it would permanently disturb and/or prevent access to the information about the past contained in the site. Impacts to the site would be major and long term.

In addition, the stockpile will adversely impact a site of tribal importance through alteration of setting.

All agreed-upon mitigation pertaining to this site will be outlined in an MOA and HPTP detailing proponent responsibilities for implementing mitigation to site impacts.

By implementation of the mitigation measures detailed in the FMBI and APS HPTPs and MOAs, the adverse impacts will be minimized to less than significant.

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat

No threatened or endangered plant species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) occur in the project area.

No threatened or endangered critical habitat listed under the ESA occurs in the vicinity of the project area. Two species listed under the ESA, the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii eximius*) and yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), are unlikely to occur in the project area but have the potential to occur in the larger analysis area described in Chapter 3, Section 3.8.2, of the EA. There is limited riparian vegetation within the stockpile extension area that could be used as suitable migratory and dispersal habitat. However, no direct or indirect impacts to threatened and endangered species are expected to occur.

It is recognized in the EA that all components of the Proposed Actions have the potential to affect sensitive plant and animal special status species; therefore, BLM has recommended mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. Sensitive species covered under these mitigation measures include Sonoran desert tortoise, Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*), and migratory birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. See the EA, Chapter 3, Section 3.8, Wildlife Resources, for more information.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law

The Proposed Actions do not violate or threaten any known federal, state, or local law or requirement imposed for protection of the environment.

The Proposed Actions conform to the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 United States Code [USC] 4371 *et seq.*; 40 CFR 1501–1508) and Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 USC 1701–1785), and are compliant with the ESA, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and Executive Orders 11514, 11593, 11990, 12898, 13007, 13186, and 13175.

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Date